

Parks specialist seeks school board post

By Karen Olson
Missourian staff writer

When Arlin Epperson goes to work each morning, he is just as likely to head for a park or recreation center as his office in Clark Hall at the University.

Epperson, 38, is a cooperative extension specialist with the University's College of Public and Community Services, which "provides technical assistance to communities for planning recreation facilities and programs throughout the state." Epperson says his job "involves traveling around Missouri, looking at area recreation facilities and programs and assisting in planning both."

A well-groomed professional, Epperson belies the stereotyped image of

sweat-shirted, sneaker-clad parks and recreation personnel. "The image of a parks and recreation specialist is changing," he said. "Today he is a problem-solver. He has to be able to assess the recreational needs of a community, evaluate its financial resources, and provide programs in response to those needs within the framework of a budget."

It is a job with responsibilities similar to those of a school board, he says. "I have to work with community groups and keep them informed about their community's recreational needs, but I also have to help them translate our recommendations into reality. For this, I have to be informed about referendums and finance. I have had some experience consulting on referendums."

Epperson's experience includes

the candidates

work as a recreation leader with the Milwaukee, Wis., schools and a job as coordinator of adult education in the Atchison, Kan., schools.

Finding ways to finance recreation projects is becoming one of Epperson's biggest problems. "The financial crisis in America is almost overwhelming," he says.

Getting a favorable vote on a referendum for a community swimming pool poses the same problems as passing a school tax levy, Epperson says. Passing a tax levy "is a question of get-

ting the people in favor of the levy out to vote. The ones against it will be out to vote anyway. This takes a long-term, persuasive informational program."

"You can't begin an informational program one month before the vote because attitudes are created over a long period of time. People are more likely to vote yes on a referendum if they're informed about the successful programs as well as the immediate needs. In addition, there are always a lot of people who are apathetic, but we try to reach them, too," he said.

Besides working to rouse apathetic voters, Epperson, of 1003 S. Eastwood Circle, spends much of his time reaching out to the young people in the community. "I'm a faculty adviser for my church group and a lay-ordained minister for the Reorganized Church of

Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints."

National youth foundation work and work as a campus minister have made him optimistic about the direction American youth are taking, he says. "Today's youth are much better educated. Their human relations and social skills are highly developed. They're adults in every respect except maturity."

Epperson and his wife Mary have two children. "As I see it, American youth has two ways to go," he says. "They can turn to humanitarian, spiritual objectives or they can embrace the materialism of our society and feel frustrated because they've had it all. They've had experiences I didn't have until I was 30."

Thursday: Patsy Garner



Arlin Epperson
School board candidate

The Midway Heights school board Tuesday reassessed its stand on annexation

(See story on Page 16A)

Columbia Missourian

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Columbia Police Chief David Walsh
City officers evaluate his first year

Ethan Hoffman

Highbarger claims filed in affidavit

By Sanford Mehlitz
Missourian staff writer

Columbia police officer Carroll Highbarger charged Tuesday that Police Chief David Walsh and City Manager Terry Novak are punishing him because they believe persons outside the department wielded undue influence on its operations through him.

In a sworn affidavit filed Tuesday with the Columbia Personnel Advisory Board, Highbarger said Novak indicated that he hired Walsh to rid the department of the political influence of "Frank Conley, Bob Perry, Milt Harper and Hank Waters."

After reading the affidavit at a meeting Tuesday afternoon, the personnel board decided it did not have jurisdiction to initiate a hearing in the case, but did pass a motion recommending to Novak that he request a public hearing before the board.

Walsh recently transferred Highbarger from the detective bureau to street patrol after a former Columbia Daily Tribune reporter charged Highbarger made lewd comments to her. Walsh has said that Highbarger needs "more supervision" and that he wants "more insulation" between Highbarger and himself.

The affidavit charges that Highbarger's transfer was a malicious action, and that Novak and Walsh have violated city personnel ordinances by denying Highbarger recourse.

During a Feb. 10 meeting of Highbarger, Novak and Walsh in the city manager's office, Highbarger says, Novak told him Walsh had orders to rid the police department of the influence of Circuit Court Judge Conley, Boone County Juvenile Officer Perry, Boone County Prosecuting Attorney Harper and Tribune Publisher Waters.

According to the affidavit, Novak told Highbarger that he "represents those four people and we don't want their political influence in the police department, we don't want them telling the police department what to do any more and that he (Novak) had given the chief clear instructions to rid the police department of their influence and that he knew what Chief Walsh was doing (See LEWD, Page 16A)

3 debate pros, cons of city development

By Ramsdell Pierson
Missourian staff writer

Does Columbia need more industrial development? Don't expect to get the same opinions from the president of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce and a University sociology professor.

Speaking Tuesday to 25 persons at the YMCA-YWCA Noon Forum at the University Memorial Union, Don Dugan, Columbia Chamber of Commerce President, City Manager Terry Novak and University sociology professor Rex Campbell offered facts and opinions that rarely agreed.

Campbell said he is satisfied with Columbia as it is. "There are 60,000 people living in Columbia now with a low rate of population growth in the last year, a high quality of living, relatively good public services, and less than half

the unemployment rate of the rest of the state.

"Why does one want to change all that?"

Dugan, a promoter of industrial development, answered, saying he does not want to change Columbia from "good to bad, but from good to better." He said he is concerned that Columbia now may be overdependent on the University and state and federal "institutions" located here for jobs and sources of income.

Dugan said he is afraid the University may become smaller in the future, while the city remains dependent on it.

But, Campbell said, higher education has been one of the most stable sources of employment in our economy. "The drawing power of the University would make it the last university in the state whose enrollment would be lowered."

Dugan said he would like to offset the dependence on the University and government institutions by inviting businesses to the city on a "selected" basis. He said the chamber has a long-range objective of attracting "non-polluting and light industries" to Columbia and Boone County.

Novak did not actively engage in the discussion, but said he wished persons would refer to business growth as "economic development" rather than "industrial."

He said his office uses the term to show "our concern is not necessarily for large industrial development, though this is one element of it."

Health industry, small industries and a whole set of activities involving small businesses with a small number of em-

(See DUGAN, Page 13A)

Most policemen approve Walsh Insight

By Jim Price,
Sue Stankey
and Scott R. Benarde
Missourian staff writers

"I think the department's probably a little better than it was a year ago. If it weren't for this Highbarger thing, I'd say there would be no question that the department has improved considerably," said one veteran Columbia police officer.

His assessment is representative of the feelings expressed by most of the 11 policemen interviewed by the Columbia Missourian a year after David Walsh became chief of police. Walsh was sworn in April 1, 1975. Those interviewed ranged from patrolmen to commanders.

The officers said the department has shown an overall improvement, but Walsh's success has been tempered by occasional arbitrary actions and his handling of the aborted firing attempt and subsequent transfer of Detective Carroll Highbarger. That incident has divided the department and has had a chilling effect on the morale of the policemen, they said.

But City Manager Terry Novak, the man who hired Walsh, said, "I think things have improved. I have an absolutely favorable impression of Chief Walsh." Novak said he is pleased with Walsh's department reorganization and

community awareness programs.

Walsh said he generally is pleased with the progress made by the department in the last year. "The changes in the chain of command have streamlined things. I feel more input coming from lower levels in things they want."

But, he said, "There's not as much input as I would like." In time, the supervisors will become more accustomed to the new chain of command and they will realize they have more authority, he said.

Time also will help problems that have appeared in the last year between supervisors and patrolmen, he expects. "I think most of the supervisors are good."

"The Highbarger issue has not helped the police department," he said. "But in the long run it will be insignificant." The Highbarger incident was just a simple transfer, he insisted.

Policemen said Walsh's realignment of the department, the new chain of command and improved officer training have been the major improvements of his first year.

The six divisions that reported directly to former police chief Paul (See POLICE, Page 16A)

Stephens keeps science positions

By Steven Rosen
Missourian staff writer

Two Stephens College faculty members learned Tuesday afternoon that the administration will not cut their teaching positions for next fall as they had feared.

James Hoerter and George Bodner, both first-year natural science faculty members, received contract renewals for next fall from Dean of Faculty Robert Funk. Funk earlier had said one of the two positions probably would be

cut by the college to help reduce a \$377,000 budget deficit.

Last Friday, the natural science department said a group of 10 to 15 public school vocational education students probably would enroll in science department classes for next fall. The additional students are part of an operating room technicians' program.

Neither President Arland F. Christ-Janer nor Funk would say Tuesday if the new program resulted in retaining the science position.

"I was very pleased that both con-

tracts were issued," said Bodner, a chemistry instructor. It's just a reflection of our support from faculty and students.

"I think the fact that it's difficult to make cuts from our department shows our strength," he said.

Lee Howell, natural science department chairman, said the dean must have had enough justification to keep both positions.

The two science instructors and a first-year music instructor were told earlier this month their contracts would

not be renewed. Seven other full-time faculty positions will be cut through attrition.

Hoerter, Bodner and other faculty members met with the president and the dean last week to discuss possible alternatives to the cuts. Bodner said, "I think the arguments we presented that the proposed cuts would significantly damage our department and its curriculum were quite valid."

Howell said the department's arguments "apparently hit home." "We took this very seriously," he said.

Youth was like others, but he made one mistake

By Carolyn Callison
Missourian staff writer

Darrell Wycoff was not very different from most 14-year-old boys. He loved football or "any kind of sports." He was a good athlete. He had lots of friends.

But at 7:25 p.m. Friday, Darrell, 1200 Range Line St., was pronounced dead by the Fulton medical examiner.

He died because he stuck his head into a plastic bag to get high and inhaled too much aerosol in the cooking spray inside, the medical officer said.

"It's been a real tragedy for our community," said Mrs. Crane, Darrell's former teacher at Auxvasse elementary school. "Darrell was a very affectionate child, and he made friends very easily."

Darrell had been visiting his best friend, who lives in Auxvasse. Darrell's grandmother, Mrs. Juanita Keith, of Mexico, Mo., said the boys were with several other people Friday night, but his best friend was the only one who stayed with him when he lost consciousness.

"They were like brothers," she said. His friend brought Darrell back to life once, she said, and he called the ambulance and the police.

The reaction to Darrell's death at the school was mainly one of "shock," said Mike Hampton, Auxvasse football coach.

"Darrell was a good student," his grandmother said, "but kids try these things and they never know how much."

"I'm hoping some people will profit by what happened to Darrell," she said.

Darrell was born in St. Louis, Feb. 16, 1962. He moved to California when he was four, and lived there six years. Then he and his family returned to Missouri, and lived in several towns, including Mexico and Auxvasse.

Darrell and his mother moved to Columbia from Auxvasse in October 1975. She worked at the Magnolia Inn here. Darrell attended school at Jefferson Junior High School.

He has been enrolled at various times in the Auxvasse schools, and Ronald Cope, Auxvasse elementary school

principal, said Darrell "had never been in any trouble — at least not more than the ordinary 14-year-old boy. He was on the football team and a good athlete."

His mother was to lose her job because the Magnolia Restaurant is closing temporarily during a change in management. She is under sedation. "I don't know what she'll do now," Mrs. Keith said.

Darrell and his mother were planning to move to Mexico, Mo., in June where his grandmother and sisters, Venita, 15, and Mrs. Jonita Schudel, 18, live.

"Darrell was well-liked by everybody he came into contact with," Hampton said. "He was a pretty independent kid, more aware and more grownup than the rest."

Darrell won the seventh grade Football Player of the Year award at Auxvasse this year. "While he was in football, he was the best player I had. When you asked him to do it, he did it, in football and everything else," Hampton said.

"He was a good kid, a real good football player, and a good friend."